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DANTE'S *PURGATORIO*.

BY SUSAN E. BLOW.

The theme of Dante's "*Purgatorio*" is the purification of the soul. It describes not a place, but a process; not a future possibility, but an ever-present reality. It represents the eternal transition from evil to good, and all struggling souls may find in it a reflection of their conflict and a sure prophecy of their final victory. Wherever there is spiritual development, *there* is *Purgatory*.

The theory of the poem is that goodness is not a dower, but an achievement. This second kingdom is one in which by effort "the human spirit doth purge itself." Man is a worm "born to bring forth the angelic butterfly." Paradise is at the top of a precipitous mountain. The climbing in the beginning is tiresome and painful, but "aye the more one climbs the less it hurts." There is nowhere in the poem a trace of the heresy which confounds what man is with what he may become, and which paralyzes effort by ignoring the significance of choice.

The sin which must be overcome is described variously as mist, slough, scum, blindness, and smoke, and as paralysis, languor, malady, weight, crookedness, and knot. As mist, slough, scum, blindness, and smoke, it is that which prevents us from seeing the true; as languor, weight, malady, and paralysis, it is that which impedes our pursuit of the good; as crookedness and knot, it represents the deed which must be undone before there can be any right doing.

The source of all goodness is God. Man becomes good by opening his heart to receive the stream of influence always pouring toward him from God. Holiness is not an evolution, but a revealed and communicated life. Sin in its last analysis is the substitution of self for God; the assertion of an abstract individualism as against a universal life; the futile effort of a withering branch to maintain its being apart from the vine to which it properly belongs. In the fifteenth Canto of the "*Purgatory*" Dante sets forth this view with great clearness, explaining that the goodness, infinite and ineffable, which is above "always gives of itself so much as it finds ardor." In the "*Convito*" he illustrates the

same truth by suggesting how differently the light of the sun is received by the dull clod of earth, by pure gold, by precious stones which refract its rainbow-colors, and by the mirror through which it is concentrated into a burning point. Finally, in the "Paradiso" he again repeats that the "brightness is proportioned to the ardor, the ardor to the vision."

In this view of the relationship of the soul to God is grounded the true conception of human freedom. Man is free when he knows, loves, and wills the good. Until then his freedom is ideal, not actual—something he may conquer but does not possess. He wins liberty by renouncing caprice; or, in other words, achieves selfhood by crucifying self. He becomes a freedman of the universe only by a self-emancipation from the slavery of ignorance and sin. Hence Virgil introduces Dante to the stern warden of Purgatory as one who is seeking liberty. Statius declares that only after five hundred years of pain has he felt "a free volition for a better seat." Not until he is near the summit of the purgatorial mount does Dante feel "for flight within him the pinions growing," and it is when they stand upon the topmost step of the long stairway that Virgil declares to him,

"Free and upright and sound is thy free-will,
And error were it not to do its bidding :
Thee o'er thyself I therefore crown and mitre."

Man rises above choice through long exercise in right choosing. Holiness becomes an impulse only when it has long been a habit. Spontaneity in goodness is the final triumph of persistent and painful conflict with besetting sin.

The coin fresh from the mint of thought shows clearly its character and value. Circulation dims its lustre, wears away its substance, and blunts its edge. We pass it from hand to hand, careless of its lessening weight, and not even glancing at its fading image and superscription. Familiarity with a truth is generally in inverse proportion to its comprehension, and in the end there comes a time when men know it so well that they cease to think it.

Such has been in our day the fate of the truth which declares the relationship of each individual life to the life of God. As a real thought it seems to have almost died out of the minds of men.

From a quickening principle it has shrunk into a formula; from a burning conviction it has faded into a sentiment, and we are now admonished that we assail its sanctity when we try to think it. Such admonition ignores the fact that thought conditions feeling by supplying the object which feeling demands. Even in the animal it is vision which arouses desire, as it is desire which stimulates to act. Thought, feeling, and will are not independent, but each lives in and through the others. If we do not see how God's grace is poured out upon us, we shall soon cease to feel the out-pouring.

To really re-think our relationship to God we must consciously expand our faith in revelation. A living God is acting on our living souls. He has not once spoken and then forever relapsed into silence. He has not once shone on the world and left to it only this remembered light. Day by day he is shining to our eyes and speaking to our hearts. The infinite universe is His self-revelation, and by its reaction defines to us His perfection and our defect.

In the scientific doctrine of modification through environment we have the beginning of a true thought of relationship to God. To complete it we need only recognize that environment is spiritual as well as physical, and that it is not fixed but infinitely expansive. In a word, it stands for the totality of influence bearing upon the individual object, and it has the beneficent quality of widening and deepening to meet increasing need. In it resides the fulness by appropriating which the individual develops. Evolution, therefore, truly conceived, is not the thought of a less by its own inherent power becoming a greater, but the far deeper thought of actual nothingness lifted into being by the communication of life.

By the rewards and penalties of nature man learns physical laws, and through the reaction of organized humanity upon the individual is developed the sense of moral law or the ideal of duty. All spiritual development is grounded in man's existence in the species. Culture is the process through which the individual reproduces within himself the experience of the race. Its goal is the complete realization of the species within the individual, and its essential condition such an attitude of man as shall render him accessible to the influence of mankind. This insight enables us to define goodness as perfect self-activity, realized in the perfect com-

munion of each man with all men. Communion must be perfect in order that experience may be shared, activity must be complete in order that it may be reproduced. Hence, in sloth and selfish exclusion may be found the seeds of every vice. Still deeper consideration reveals sloth as the paralysis resulting from self-exclusion, and thus reduces the infinite variety of the poisonous growths of sin to the single fatal germ of spiritual pride.

We hide from ourselves the reality of God's action on our souls by blinding our eyes to the truth of mediation. We practically forget that, though the source of inspiration is the Divine Spirit, its instruments are men, and its organ is the Church. What truth do we know to-day which has not been declared to us by the voice of man? What man who has declared truth has not proclaimed that to him it was given by inspiration of the Spirit? The Spirit is the indwelling life of that great Church which, in the profoundest sense, is the "Mother of the Soul," and this Church is organized humanity, ever revealing to individual man the divine ideal which, as soon as recognized, he identifies with his own deepest self. Because there is One Spirit in all men, man can combine with man; because this Spirit is divine there is the possibility of communion with God.

Instruments of grace are the mighty institutions which, revealing and enforcing ideal standards, enable the individual to measure his own defect and inspire him to overcome it; a store-house of grace is that great "deposit of faith," the true literature of the world; a "Means of Grace" is every work of Art in which is incarnate a Spiritual truth; "Channels of Grace" are all honest experiences of sorrow or joy; "Ministers of Grace" are the strong thinkers who redeem our feeble thought—the heroes who spur our languid wills and the saints whose ardor fans into fresh flame the dying embers of our devotion. The revelation is manifold and yet one; the inspiration from of old and yet ever new; the grace thus variously bestowed (as the old theologians truly taught) prevenient, co-operant, and illuminant—for it comes to us before we seek it—it fortifies our feeblest endeavor, and crowns our persevering struggle with the beatific vision of final truth.

Only with this thought of universal mediation in our minds can we understand the symbolism of Dante throughout the "Purgatory." Virgil, his Guide, personifying human reason, describes himself

as an instrument of Grace. "I came not of myself," he declares, "but a Lady from heaven descended, at whose prayer I aided this one with my company." Purgatory has a warden, for defect demands guidance, and laggard spirits must be spurred to run toward the purifying mount. When night falls and danger threatens, angels descend to guard the praying shades. By the divine Lucia, Dante is borne in his sleep to the presence of the angel who guards the gate of Purgatory. Only at the entreaty of the three celestial Virtues does Beatrice turn upon the poet her holy eyes and unveil to him the beauty of her face, and only "as reflected in her eyes" can he behold the mystic Griffin shining, "now with the one now with the other nature." Throughout the sevenfold realm mediation is the central truth recognized by the repentant Spirits. "Make known my state to my good Costanza, for those on earth can much advance us here." "Tell my Giovanna that she pray for me." "I pray thee to pray for me when thou shalt be above." "Thus speedily has led me to drink of the sweet wormwood of these torments my Nella with her overflowing tears." Such are the petitions and such the acknowledgments of the souls who, as Dante himself tells us,

"Only pray that some one else may pray,
So as to hasten their becoming holy."

Prayer is the expression of spiritual life. The more spiritual life there is in the world, the more swiftly is the individual borne forward on its strong currents. The more people there are who love well, says our poet, the more can each one love, "for as a mirror the one reflects the other." Conversely the good of one is the good of all, and hence when a single soul in Purgatory has prevailed over its sin the whole mountain shakes with joy and rings with a psalm of thanksgiving.

Having restored ourselves to participation in Dante's vitalizing thought, that man achieves goodness by appropriation of the divine life which is always offering itself to him, we may follow him in his journey through the realm of purification. This realm is figured as "the hill which highest toward the heavens uplifts itself." It rises from an island, and its base forms an Ante-Purgatory where souls are detained until they have atoned for delay in repentance. Around the mount of Purgatory proper run seven terraces whereon

are punished the seven deadly sins. Stairways rough and steep lead up from terrace to terrace, and upon the summit of the mountain is the Earthly Paradise. Around the shore of the island grow the rushes, which symbolize humility, because they alone of plants yield to the shock of waves. With them must Dante be girt before he can enter Purgatory. The cord of humility must take the place of that cord of mere human strength with which he had once thought to "catch the leopard of the painted skin," and which in his journey through the Inferno he had resolutely cast into the pit of fraud. Proud self-confidence, by excluding the soul from influence, paralyzes its powers, while humility, which makes man teachable, is the antecedent condition of all mental and spiritual growth.

The changed attitude of the soul is the significant distinction between the Purgatory and the Inferno. The spiritual universe is always the same, but it is differently reflected in the mirror of individual consciousness. The soul steeped in sin has become a distorting mirror which gives back love as hate, and heaven as hell. Each denizen of the Inferno might echo the despairing cry which Milton puts into the mouth of Lucifer: "What matter where, if *I* be still the same?" The consciousness of the penitents in Purgatory is a mirror which reflects truly but feebly—a glass over which there is a mist which must be removed. The repentant spirit knows its own sin, but at first defines goodness negatively as simply the opposite of itself. In the recoil of pain it recognizes the antagonism of its evil deed to the spiritual whole and resolves on amendment; but the true spiritual ideal hovers before it dimly, being obscured by the clouds and smoke of its own sinful passions. There is, in a word, still indwelling sin, but there is no longer a consent of the will to sin.

How the change is brought about, who can say? Not through sinning, for sin is refusal to learn the lesson which grace is teaching through the ministry of pain. To me it seems that each soul should tremble in mingled rapture and fear before its own blessed and yet so often fatal power of choice. Grace may constrain, but it cannot coerce. Love may appeal, but it cannot compel. Two things are sure: Against his own will and without his own effort no man can be made holy or wise. To influence his will nothing will be left untried. How will the struggle end? I do not know.

May man forever defy influence? I cannot tell. What I do know is that every committed sin sinks the soul into deeper darkness—fires it with more burning antagonism—freezes it in a more stagnant isolation. Sin is a help never, a hindrance always, to the progress of the spirit.

As the poets stand among the bending rushes on the island shore there arrives a boat steered by an angel and bearing souls to Purgatory. In contrast to the blasphemies of the spirits who assemble "on the joyless banks of Acheron," these shades are chanting the great psalm which, under the veil of the deliverance of Israel from Egypt, declares the deliverance of the soul from sin. "Not unto us, O Lord! not to us, but to thy name give glory," is the refrain, "and hope in the Lord" the burden of the song. Sin projects internal limit as external fate, and curses not itself, but "God and the human race." Repentance sees that evil lies not in the universe but in self, and thus converts even the inward limit into vanishing defect. With the sense that we are slaves who may achieve freedom, emancipation was begun. What matters present ignorance to the heir of all knowledge? In foretaste of the joy which shall come with the morning, what becomes of the sorrow of the night?

Traversing the region of Ante-Purgatory, the poets meet four classes of penitents whose common characteristic is that they have deferred repentance until the end of life. The differences between them are very suggestive. The first throng seem to be moving their feet and yet seem not to move forward, thus suggesting effort without advance. These souls "have died in contumacy of Holy Church," and are condemned to wait "outside the bank thirty times told the time that they have been in their presumption." The spirits of the second class stand listlessly in a shade behind a rock, and Belacqua, who is their typical representative, sits "embracing his knees, holding his face down low between them, and shows himself more careless than if Sloth herself his sister were." These are the simple procrastinators, and their condemnation is to remain outside the gate of Purgatory for a time as long as the time of their procrastination. The third throng are moving slowly forward and singing the "*Miserere*." These are they who have been slain by violence, but, admonished by a light from heaven, repented at the last hour, and, "both penitent and pardoning," issued

from life, reconciled to God. The fourth class embraces kings and princes who deferred repentance through the pressure of temporal cares. It is near sunset when the poets come upon them in a valley bright with grass and flowers, and fragrant with the sweetness of a thousand odors. These spirits sing a song of praise, and follow it with a prayer for protection during the rapidly descending night.

We understand Dante just so long as we keep constantly in mind that all his descriptions are external images of spiritual states. With him sin is not one thing and penalty another external to it, but the inevitable reaction of sin is the penalty of sin. So salvation is ceasing to be evil and becoming good. Ante-Purgatory, as a whole, signifies that initial phase in the process of transition in which the soul simply turns away from evil. It represents a state of aspiration which has not yet deepened into energy—a sympathy with good which precedes its ardent pursuit. Souls in this stage of development do not see God, but are quickened by desire to see him. The hovering ideal is not defined, but is “a substance of things hoped for and an evidence of things not seen.” During this part of the journey the one injunction of Virgil is, to be “steadfast in hope,” and the witness of the spirits is, that return to good is possible “so long as hope has anything of green.”

As the progressive emptying of self is the condition of a progressive recognition of the ideal, those souls who are most steeped in selfishness have before them the longest and most painful struggle. The four groups of spirits we have just considered typify four different grades of character. The presumptuous pride which excludes itself from influence condemns itself to movement in which there is no progress. The man who will not combine with other men cannot advance. He who will hear no teacher and read no books must remain in his ignorance. He who defies the laws and penalties of society crystallizes his own defect. Not listening to the voice of the great spiritual church, he makes himself “an heathen man and a publican.” His is the supreme violation because holiness is the complete interpenetration of the individual and the universal life. Therefore, by every act he retrogrades, and with profound insight the poet declares that to undo his deed will require “thirty times told the time that he has been in his presumption.”

For every moment of slothful procrastination man pays the penalty of loss of power, and persistent inaction must result in paralysis of the will. He who refuses to climb shall surely be brought to ask, "What's the use of climbing?" Nor is inertia acknowledged inertia overcome. Only by seeking the whip and spur of active influence, and by effort kept up in despite of pain, can the supine sluggard lift himself—he who sits crouching rise to his feet, and he who stands listless begin a forward march.

The penitents slain by violence illustrate a higher grade of character. By the act of pardoning their slayers they have entered into the divine life of forgiveness. This new light dawning within them makes their darkness visible, and they pant and pray for the cleansing fire and the purifying stream. So through care for the welfare of their subjects the princes in the valley have promoted their own. They have achieved a virtue which points to its own consummation. Reaching down to give help, they have learned to reach upward to receive it. The true King is himself a type and prophecy of the King of Kings, and, by reflecting the divine ideal, he begins to aspire toward it.

In the Valley of the Princes, Dante falls asleep and dreams that an eagle with feathers of gold swooping upon him snatches him upward to the fire. Out of this dream he wakes to find himself at the Gate of Purgatory, and is told by Virgil that during his sleep he was borne thither by Lucia. That the dream is a "shadow of coming events," the poet himself tells us, declaring that in sleep "the mind almost prophetic in its visions is"—as in a related passage he affirms that "oftentimes before a deed is done sleep has tidings of it."

In a valuable appendix to his translation of the "Purgatory" Butler points out that "the eagle was from the earliest Christian times an emblem of the soul which most aspires to meditate on divine things, and as such was adopted for the special cognizance of St. John;" and he notices also that the fire up to which the poet is borne is the Empyrean Heaven or abode of that "Perfect Deity who alone perfectly sees and knows himself." In plain words, the dream anticipates a revelation of the divine ideal, and implies that through contemplation of this ideal the soul shall be changed into its likeness. "Beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, we are changed into the same image from glory to glory."

The vision discerned is matched with the momentum acquired, for the poet wakes to find himself beyond the negative region of Ante-Purgatory, and in view of the true entrance to the cleansing mount. Herein is mirrored a universal fact of spiritual experience. How often after what has seemed like fruitless search for truth do its premonitions dawn upon the mind apparently unsought! How often after a moral struggle in which we seem to be growing worse instead of better do we suddenly find ourselves transported to a region of purer moral aspiration! The essential fact is the preceding struggle. Only he who persists in moving his feet, even when he seems not to move forward, shall dream of the eagle or be borne upward by Lucia. Grace can bestow only "so much of ardor as it finds," and thus, though all good is a gift, it is also a conquest. Yielding to passion, the unconscious transition is to a lower depth, as Dante swooning on the banks of Acheron wakes to find himself upon the brink of Hell.

All true representations of the origin and progress of moral development have implied more or less clearly that only an inward vision of the ideal convicts of sin and inspires to effort. Whatever view may be taken of the history of the Jews, two things are certain. Of all ancient nations they had the clearest consciousness of God and the deepest sense of their own sin. The total revelation of the books of Exodus and Leviticus may be compressed into the two declarations—"I am the Lord your God," and "Ye shall be holy, for I am holy." Immediately following this attained consciousness of truth and duty come the record of the sedition of Miriam and Aaron, the rebellion of Korah, the repeated murmurings of the whole people, the plague of fiery serpents, and the elevation of the symbolic serpent of brass. Translated from figurative representation into direct statement, the lesson taught is that the vision of truth defines existing defect. Sedition, rebellion, and complaint were not new in the world; what was new was the sense of their exceeding wrong. "Sin was in the world," says Paul, "before the law, but I had not known sin but by the law." The sting of conscience results from perception of what we are, in the light of what we should be.

In accord with this view of moral progress, Dante's dream of the Empyrean is followed by his profound self-abasement at the gate of Purgatory. Three stairs lead up to the gate. The first is

marble white, and in it the poet "mirrors himself as he appears;" the second is dark and uneven, and cracked lengthwise and across; the third is flaming red, as "blood that from a vein is spurting forth." These stairs symbolize that candid self-recognition which issues in heart-broken sorrow for sin and ardent consecration to God of the "life-blood of body, soul, and spirit." Drawn over them by Virgil, the poet prostrates himself at the feet of the angel, who guards the gate and whose gray robe symbolizes the "ashes of repentance." He smites upon Dante's forehead with a sword, describing thereon seven "P's," marks of the seven germinal sins which must now be purged from the penitent soul; plies the lock first with the silver key, "symbol of the science which discerns the true penitent," then with the golden key, "image of absolving power," and at last pushes open the gate with the significant exclamation,

"Enter—but I give you warning
That forth returns whoever looks behind."

The song of the "*Te Deum*" falls upon the ear, and thus "praising God and acknowledging him to be the Lord," the poets cross the boundary-line which separates regret from repentance, aspiration from energy, mere desire from consecrated resolve.

In Purgatory proper is represented the gradual elimination of that indwelling sin against which the soul in Ante-Purgatory has entered its protest. Evidently, therefore, we must expect to find upon the ascending terraces diminishing degrees of sin and increasing degrees of participation in the divine life. The process is not one in which the soul is "left empty and garnished," but one wherein evil is crowded out by expanding good.

As holiness is living in the universal life, those sins are most heinous which most consciously repudiate existence in the species and assert a naked, defiant, and self-destroying individualism. Hence, farthest from the Earthly Paradise is the terrace of the proud, as deepest in the Inferno is the frozen circle of the traitors, in whom pride reigns supreme. The characteristic of pride is that it applies to things spiritual the law of the unspiritual, and desires monopoly where the very nature of the object desired demands division. The belief that there *may* be, the desire that there *should* be, or the resolve that there *shall* be an unshared

excellence constitutes the first degree of pride. In its second degree pride rejoices in another's lack; and in its final phase it repudiates the spiritual good which will not be monopolized.

Envy, which is punished upon the second terrace, may be crudely distinguished from pride through the fact of a different relationship to its object. The proud man (in his own estimation) already excels his neighbor, but the envious man perceives that his neighbor excels him. To himself the latter seems only seeking equality; the former is consciously insisting upon monopoly. Envy asks for itself *more* and for its neighbor *less*; pride demands for itself *all* and grants to its neighbor *none*.

Anger differs from envy and pride both in the degree and the permanence of its insistence upon self. As its supreme type, Dante chooses Haman, who, "because Mordecai bowed not nor did him reverence," prepared a gallows and sought to have him hanged; and he describes the angry man as one who "through injury appears so to take shame that he becomes gluttonous of vengeance." Thus anger would seem rather an inability to sustain an imagined wrong than a deliberate desire to inflict wrong, and we may trace its root to that undue self-esteem which, insisting upon a recognition beyond its deserts, conceives itself injured when such recognition is withheld.

The common characteristic of pride, envy, and anger is distorted self-love, but the supremacy of self is greatest in pride and least in anger. Advancing to the terrace of Sloth, we find self subordinated, but not overcome. The soul accepts as its ideal the universal life, but, clogged by the impediment of self, cannot at once create its image. The heart has turned to its true object, but its love is still a feeble flame. It must be fanned into a fervent heat which shall burn out all lesser loves and thus accomplish the soul's emancipation from appetite in its three forms of covetousness, gluttony, and lust. This work is achieved upon the higher terraces, and then the soul, "purified through suffering," is welcomed by the song of angels to the kingdom prepared from the foundation of the world.

So long as the soul contradicts the spiritual universe it must feel the recoil of the universe as pain. Hence, upon each terrace of Purgatory is imaged the suffering which is the reaction of sin. The bodies of the proud are bent double by the burdens on their

backs; the eyelids of the envious are sewn up with iron thread; the angry are involved in thick smoke, and upon the terrace of the slothful "the power of the legs is put in truce." Prostrate and immovable the avaricious purge their sin; in hunger and thirst is punished the gluttony which beyond measure followed appetite, and in purifying flame is burned away unholy love.

The symbolism of the punishments is apparent. The principle of spiritual life is to grow by giving and by sharing to increase. This principle re-enforces the humble man but presses with intolerable weight upon the proud soul which has repudiated it. Nothing blinds the eyes like envy, and anger creates a smoky moral atmosphere in which all duties are obscure. The inevitable outcome of slothful disuse is loss of power, while avarice, loving supremely earthly things, lifts not the eye toward heaven, and, by extinguishing the love of good, destroys the stimulus to action. Thus, in the truest sense, the avaricious man is prostrate and immovable. The reaction of unbridled appetite is craving, associated with satiety, and through burning shame the souls of carnal sinners must press forward toward the benediction of the pure in heart.

The recoil of the spiritual universe is, however, not the characteristic mark of the purgatorial state. This is even more clearly defined in the "*Inferno*," where the violation is supreme. Thus, as against the slow and painful progress of the proud in Purgatory, we have their stultification in the "*Inferno*"; the purgatorial smoke of anger becomes in the "*Inferno*" boiling mud and a river of blood, while the craving and satiety of penitent gluttons are in the impenitent intensified into the rending of voracious Cerberus and the descent of the "Eternal accursed cold and heavy rain." What the *Inferno* lacks, and Purgatory possesses, is the vision of the Ideal. It is this which incites the activity through which alone defect can be cancelled, and the effort to actualize it is rewarded by its clearer revelation.

Upon the rock-walls which bound the terrace of the proud are carved typical examples of humility. This is the most external representation of the Ideal in Purgatory, and follows first upon its symbolic prophecy in the dream of the Eagle. To the envious the ideal of mercy is proclaimed by a passing voice, implying thus an internal sense which makes possible its immediate recognition

Meekness is revealed in an inward vision, and when we reach the terrace of the slothful we find that the spiritually discerned ideal has become a conscious inciting motive. "Quick, quick"—cry the eager spirits—"so that the time may not be lost by little love," and they spur themselves to fresh ardor by recalling how "Mary to the mountain ran, and Cæsar, that he might subdue Ilerda, thrust at Marseilles, and then ran into Spain." In the souls of those who mourn their avarice the ideal has become so clearly defined that they themselves discern the logical relation between their sin and its punishment, and begin to comprehend the fundamental principle of recoil. To the self-convicted glutton even temptation is turned into warning, and from amid the very branches of the tree for whose fair fruit he hungers comes the voice which bids him pass on farther without drawing near. The souls upon the final terrace have attained a higher sanctification, for they have learned that subordination of the lesser to the holier love which destroys temptation and emancipates the soul from the danger of a fall. The meeting penitents do not need to avoid each other, but they "kiss one with one, without staying, content with short greeting." Moreover, both the gluttonous and incontinent have come to love their purifying pain, and have penetrated into the "divine depths of the worship of Sorrow." The former declare that the same "wish leads them to the tree which led the Christ rejoicing to say Eli;" and of the latter we are told that they vanish in the fire "like fish in water going to the bottom." Thus, in each advancing stage of development, the ideal becomes a more internal, inclusive, and inciting power.

Increasingly illuminated by the truth, the soul realizes more profoundly the sin that contradicts it. Hence, the revelation of ideal types of character is complemented by vivid presentations of the seven deadly sins. The humility of the Virgin throws into relief the pride of Lucifer, and the love of Orestes accentuates the envious hate of Cain. For the same reason, with decreasing sin comes increasing sensitiveness of repentance. "O noble conscience and without a stain," sings the poet, "how sharp a sting is trivial thought to thee!" By the souls who are being purged of avarice we are told "that no more bitter pain the mountain has." Nowhere does Dante manifest such shrinking as in view of the cleansing flames of the topmost terrace; and it would even

seem that the crowning moment of his anguish is that in which, arraigned and condemned by Beatrice, he falls swooning upon the bank of Lethe. So the final judgment comes for each one of us when, with awakened eyes, we gaze upon Him whom we have pierced. Seeing what He is, we see all we are not.

Twice in the course of his progress from the gate of Purgatory to the Earthly Paradise does Dante sleep and dream. The first dream comes to him after he has painfully circled around the circle of Sloth, the second after he has issued from the flame, and, wearied in his ascent toward the summit of the mount, "of a stair has made his bed." In the one he has a vision of a deceiving Siren, who, seeking to allure him, is put to flight by a "Lady saintly and alert;" in the other he beholds a beautiful woman walking in a meadow, singing and gathering flowers. Her song is a key to Dante's theory of the method of spiritual development:

"Know, whosoever may my name demand,
That I am Leah, and go moving round
My beauteous hands to make myself a garland,
To please me at the mirror; here I deck me;
But never does my sister Rachel leave
Her looking-glass, and sitteth all day long.
To see her beauteous eyes as eager is she
As I am to adorn me with my hands:
Her seeing and me doing satisfies."

Taken in connection with the vision of the Eagle, which anticipates the poet's transition to the gate of Purgatory, the inner meaning of these dreams becomes clear. As the flight to the Empyrean was a symbolic presentation of the soul's ascent to God through contemplation of his nature, so the Siren shows the fleshly sins which must be overcome before the divine ideal can become incarnate in the man; and the "Lady saintly and alert" typifies the will, now purged of sloth, and sanctified by the vision of the truth. It is worthy of note that after the ascent from the terrace of Sloth sin is no longer described as obscuring vision, but only as impeding progress. We hear no more of "the smoke-stains of the world," though much still of "the malady which all the world pervades," the need of "unloosing the knot of debt," and the obligation to "circle around the mount which straightens those whom the world made crooked."

The third dream is a synthesis of the other two. If vision reacting upon desire incites to effort, so effort crowned with achievement makes possible clearer vision. To be good is to see the good, and only in identification with the divine is the divine fully revealed. When development is complete there is no real distinction between the active and contemplative life. Leah may still gather flowers, but she does so that she may please herself at the mirror; or, in prosaic statement, activity is to her simply the condition of insight. Dante's waking experiences correspond, moreover, with the premonitions of his sleep, for when he comes into the Earthly Paradise it is by Matilda (identified by all commentators as the type of sanctified activity) that he is drawn through Lethe and led to Beatrice.

In order to understand the spiritual state figured by Dante in the Earthly Paradise we must keep clearly in mind the thought of Purgatory as a purifying process. Progress through the sevenfold realm means the gradual elimination of selfishness, and, as correlative to this, increasing degrees of spiritual fellowship. It is worthy of note that throughout this second division of the Divine Comedy references to God are few and indirect. The vision of God is the blessedness of the Heavenly Paradise. The Earthly Paradise is a transition toward this joy, and represents a state of mind in harmony with the Church, or, differently expressed, entrance into the life of God as incarnate in the world.

The order of Dante's experiences in the Earthly Paradise is very suggestive. Declared by Virgil king over himself and free either to sit quiet or to walk among the beauties which surround him, he feels "eager to search in and around the heavenly forest," and moves forward until his progress is barred by a stream so clear that by comparison earth's most limpid waters seem obscure. Upon the opposite bank he sees Matilda gathering flowers, and learns from her that this stream is Lethe, which, "issuing from a fountain safe and certain, descends with virtue which takes away all memory of sin." Then suddenly warned to look and listen, the poet "beholds a lustre run athwart the spacious forest, and hears a delicious melody in the luminous air." This light and music herald the revelation of the Church, imaged as a triumphal chariot drawn by Christ under the form of the Griffin; a mystic animal which, being half-lion and half-eagle, symbolizes that union of the divine and human "which neither confounds the natures

nor divides the person." Preceding the chariot are seven apparently self-moving candlesticks, representing the seven gifts of the Spirit; and the books of the Old Testament personified as twenty-four elders clad in the white garments and crowned with the lilies of faith. Surrounding the chariot are the four apocalyptic beasts, crowned with green, the color of hope, and representing the four gospels; four nymphs robed in purple, who personify the moral virtues of Prudence, Temperance, Justice, and Fortitude; and three nymphs clad in white, green, and red, and denoting the theological virtues of Faith, Hope, and Charity. In the rear follow seven elders, robed in white but crowned with the roses of love, and representing the remaining books of the New Testament.

Very evidently we have here the representation of a visible institution, and not a revelation of its invisible life. But suddenly out of the midst of the great procession arises a solitary cry—"Come with me, my spouse, from Lebanon," shouted three times by "one from heaven commissioned." It is echoed by all, and then, "in the bosom of a cloud of flowers, covered with a white veil, wrapped in a green mantle and vested in color of the living flame," Beatrice descends upon the Chariot of the Church. Spontaneously the mind reverts to the apocalyptic vision of the Holy City, the new Jerusalem coming down from God, "prepared as a bride adorned for her husband," and recognizes in this descending Beatrice an image of the indwelling Spirit of that great heavenly Church of which all churches on earth are but types and symbols.

Dante's treatment of Beatrice gives us the key both to his poem and his poetic method. For obviously the Beatrice of the Divine Comedy is primarily the woman Beatrice Portinari. In the "*Vita Nuova*," describing the moment when he, a child, first met her, a child, Dante affirms, "At that instant the spirit of life which dwells in the most secret chamber of the heart began to tremble with such violence that it appeared fearfully in the least pulses, and trembling said these words: 'Behold a God stronger than I, who coming shall rule me.'" There is an echo of this description in the passage of the "*Purgatory*" which narrates the descent of Beatrice. The spirit of the poet trembles with awe, and, through the occult influence proceeding from "the fair and saintly Lady of his heart," feels "the mighty influence of an ancient love." It is a revival of "the power sublime that had already pierced him

through in boyhood," and he "quenches ten years of thirst" in the "light of the eyes whence love once drew his armory." Yet though truly the woman, Beatrice is not the woman alone. "Sitting with ancient Rachel," she suggests the contemplative life, and, "gazing like an eagle at the sun," she indicates its perfection. Still more profoundly apprehended as "One who withdrew from singing Hallelujah to rescue the wanderer from the dark wood"—as one whose stern salutation caused Dante to fall prostrate in contrite shame, and as one whose eyes reflect the Griffin and are themselves "the splendor of the living light eternal"—she shines forth the image of that grace which seeks and convicts the sinner, illuminates the penitent, and, by giving itself to the soul, makes the soul like itself. The Beatrice of Dante is thus one with the "Eternal Womanly" of Goethe, and represents that divine principle which always energizes to draw up the imperfect into the blessedness of its own perfection.

The vision of Beatrice is followed by Dante's passage through Lethe; or—if we may translate the poet's figure—being quickened by a higher revelation, he is pricked with a thornier penitence and thus made susceptible of a further purification. Having crossed the stream that takes away the memory of sin, he joins the procession of the Church, and then, in deeper communion with her who is "light 'twixt truth and intellect," his spirit grows prophetic. With penetrating eyes he scans the history of the Church and beholds worldly power bringing forth spiritual pride with its triple progeny of heresy, schism, and moral corruption. Upon his quickened ear falls the mournful music of the angelic chant—"O Lord! the heathen are come into thine inheritance; thy holy temple have they defiled." Thus he passes out of the communion of the visible into that of the invisible Church, and, regenerated by the waters of Eunoë, becomes "pure and disposed to mount into the stars."

Contrasting with the "Inferno," which pictures the outcome of selfish individualism in the stultification of the individual, "Purgatory" traces the redemption of man out of individualism into social communion. It treats of the soul's relation to God, not directly but as mediated by the Church, and its lesson is that in the organic relationship of the individual to the social whole is grounded the possibility of spiritual development. Hence the su-

preme sin is "Contumacy of Holy Church;" and upon the car of the Church descends Beatrice, the immortal image of divine grace. How, through the Church, the individual is lifted into participation with the divine, is the theme of the "Paradise," whose consummation is reached when the soul, "inspired by abundant grace," presumes "to fix its own sight upon the Light eternal."

The only obstacle to spiritual growth lies in ourselves. Goodness divine, which "spurns from itself all envy," is forever shining in ideal beauty and drawing the soul with cords of love. If we do not see the heavenly vision, it is because we are blinded by sin; if we do not press forward toward it, it is because we are clogged by sin. Well, therefore, shall it be with us if we take to ourselves the stern rebuke and exhortation of the grave warden of Purgatory :

" What is this, ye laggard spirits ?
What negligence, what standing still is this ?
Run to the mountain, to strip off the slough
That lets not God be manifest to you ! "

THE HUMAN FORM SYSTEMATICALLY OUTLINED AND EXPLAINED.

BY WILLIAM H. KIMBALL.

In order to carry the matter in view as directly as possible to its normal issues, let us formulate in a way to denote the involved elements :

I.
SENSORY FORM.

- 1¹. *Sense-Sense* implies an anchorage in the powers of Corporeal Sense; basic power *felt*, not expressed.
- 2¹. *Reason-Sense* operates these powers in a way to train, school, and educate them, both in their forms and activities.
- 3¹. *Wisdom-Sense* operates them in their fullness, both as powers and orderly activities.